

COMMUNITY

That's A Lot of Beef!

BY JAMES MITCHELL, JOSH MAPLES, KENNY BURDINE AND DAVID ANDERSON

On Friday, August 21, 2026, President Trump announced that the United States would allow 300,000 metric tons of ground beef to enter the country over the next 90 days without being subject to out-of-quota tariffs. The announcement also stated that these imports would be sold at 25% below current market prices. This announcement comes against the backdrop of record U.S. cattle prices, historically low domestic cattle inventories, realignment in the domestic beef packing sector, continued uncertainty surrounding the reopening of the southern border to Mexican feeder cattle, and escalation of the war with Iran.

This article provides additional context on what was announced last Friday and discusses the potential



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impacts for cattle producers and the broader U.S. cattle industry.

HOW MUCH IS 300,000 METRIC TONS?

To put the size of the announcement into per-

spective, USDA currently forecasts 2026 U.S. total commercial beef production at 25.04 billion pounds and beef imports at 6.13 billion pounds. An additional 300,000 metric tons is equivalent to approximately 661.4 million pounds of beef. Relative to USDA's current annual forecast, that would represent roughly an 11% increase in U.S. beef imports and add about 2% to total domestic beef supplies.

The impact becomes much more pronounced when we consider that these imports are expected to arrive within a 90-day period. If an additional 661.4 million pounds of beef were concentrated in the fourth quarter, it would increase expected fourth-quarter beef imports by approximately 51% and increase total fourth-quarter domestic beef supplies by about 8%. That would make the fourth quarter of 2026 the largest fourth quarter

for U.S. beef supplies on record.

SOME IMPORTANT CAVEATS

The data above assumes that the 300,000 metric tons imported was in addition to already expected beef imports. It's more likely that expanding the quota would mean that the beef already expected to come in would be imported with no tariff. While total imports will probably be larger, the net increase is unlikely to be the full 300,000 metric tons.

It is also important to clarify what type of beef the United States imports. Most beef imports are lean beef trimmings that augment domestic ground beef supplies. The U.S. does not really import ground beef. Additional imports would likely have a much larger impact on 90 percent lean beef trim-

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The Weather

When adverse weather strikes in any season, it can create immediate challenges. It can also have a long-lasting impact on individuals, families, homes, and communities. Extreme cold, heavy rain, high winds, and heat waves can cause stress on your home. Preparing your home for seasonal changes can be key to avoiding many problems later. Whether you live in urban cities or rural areas, your preparation methods must align with your environment.

Seasonal preparedness presents distinct challenges and advantages depending on whether one lives in an urban or a rural area. In rural areas, residents often face limited access to essential services including road clearing, heating and cooling system repair, and pest control. In addition, isolation during extreme weather events, such as heat waves or winter storms, can pose serious risks. This is especially true for people with health problems and those with physical or learning challenges. However, rural living can also offer several advantages. Homeowners in rural areas often have more freedom over their home and outdoor spaces. These spaces can often be adapted for gardening, composting, or cooling strategies.

Each season brings its own changes and challenges from winter's freezing temperatures to summer's sweltering heat. Taking a few simple steps throughout the year can help you present damage, stay comfortable, and keep your family safe.

Now is the time to prepare your home for the fall. You need to clear gutters and drains. Clean out gutters, drains, and downspouts so that heavy rain can flow freely off your roof. Check that downspouts are secure and that water is draining well and away from your home and not toward your foundation. Check that downspouts are secure and that water is draining at least 5 to 10 feet away from your home's foundation. This helps rain or melting ice or snow to flow more freely. Trim trees and branches. Prune long or weak limbs and branches that hang over your home, sidewalk or near power lines.

Light up outdoor areas. With shorter days, outdoor lighting improves safety and visibility. Add or replace light bulbs around doorways, walkways, and driveways to help prevent trips, falls, or unwanted visitors. Store

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Let's Think About Winter Herbs

At this point, we can sense the end of summer and start of fall. This is a perfect time to think about growing some herbs inside during the winter.

Regardless of your herb-growing experience, when you bring herbs indoors, they'll need greater than 6 hours of sunlight to do well. A south-facing window will provide the best light.

If you prefer to use grow lights, be sure they get 12 hours on and 12 hours off. Grow lights aren't as intense as sunlight.

Humidity is another problem inside a home. Dry homes can be made a bit more humid by using one or more of the following tips:

- Fill a shallow tray with pea gravel (or other rocks) then with water. Set containers with herbs on top of the pea gravel.
- Group plants together snugly. Their proximity to one another will help increase humidity around



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them.

- Use a humidifier in the room.
- Regularly mist herbs, except for rosemary which is prone to mildew issues.

NEW TO WINTER HERBS?

To plant all your herbs in one container, try a window box or strawberry pot. Get small herb plants

– admittedly, this can be difficult at this time of the year. If you're unable to locate any, try a friend or neighbor.

One of the easiest herbs to bring inside is chives. Simply dig up the clump and tease out several individual plants. A small bit of thyme, oregano, and mint can be dug up and planted inside.

To plant the strawberry pot, as you fill the container with a well-draining potting mix, tuck individual plants in each of the holes. Then add more media and repeat until you plant the last herb on top.

MORE EXPERIENCE?

Many leafier herbs, like basil, dill, cilantro, and oregano can be started from seed and will grow rather quickly. Parsley takes more patience as it germinates slowly. With these young seedlings, be sure to pinch the growing point to cause more branching. More branching means more leaves to use in your

cooking.

Stevia can be started from cuttings of your summer plants. Small stevia plants can make wonderful gifts for the holidays.

SPEAKING OF GIFTS...

Dried herbs can also make homey holiday gifts. Cut and dry your fresh herbs. Using a mortar and pestle, crush herbs. Individual dried herbs or herb mixes can be wrapped up as a holiday gift.

For more information contact the Pulaski County Extension Service at 606-679-6361. UK's Culinary Herbs publication (HO-74) has more information on harvesting, drying, and storing herbs as well as ways to use them in cooking and dried herb mixes. It is available by request and can be picked up at the office or can be found online.

Be sure to go to the Pulaski County Cooperative Extension website (<https://pulaski.mgcafe>).

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